

INTRODUCTION TO THE ICAEL STANDARDS FOR PEDIATRIC ECHOCARDIOGRAPHY LABORATORIES

An echocardiography laboratory is a unit at one postal address, composed of at least one ultrasound instrument, a Medical Director and a Technical Director. There may be additional physicians and sonographers.

An accredited pediatric echocardiography laboratory requires that the interpreting physicians and practicing sonographers be adequately trained and experienced to interpret and perform echocardiograms in children. Published documents recognize that echocardiography in pediatrics and congenital heart disease requires considerable training and expertise (see bibliography). Although published opinions vary with regard to the absolute numbers necessary for attaining and maintaining competence in echocardiography, all agree that numbers of studies performed or interpreted are helpful but not sufficient by themselves to assure clinical competence. It is recognized that many echocardiography laboratories will perform echocardiograms on children and adults and it is likely in this setting that the pediatric echocardiograms will represent a minority of the studies performed in that laboratory

The intent of the accreditation process is two-fold. It is designed to recognize laboratories that provide quality echocardiographic services. It is also designed to be used as an educational tool to improve the overall quality of the laboratory.